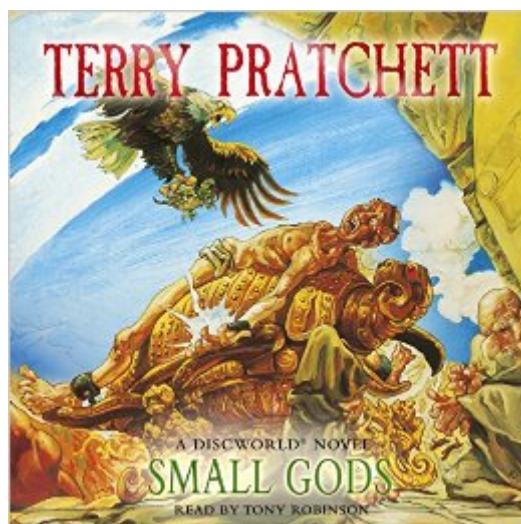


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Small Gods



Synopsis

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was: "œHey, you! For Brutha, the novice is the Chosen One. He wants peace and justice and brotherly love. He also wants the Inquisition to stop torturing him, now, please."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first twelve Discworld books were adolescent affairs, obsessed with corny jokes, screwball plots, and bumbling but lovable characters. Enjoyable treats all, but in retrospect less substantial than they could have been. "Small Gods", to me, is Terry Pratchett's first 'adult' book. The corny jokes, screwball plots, and bumbling but lovable characters are still here, but only to service a narrative soaked in significant themes and obsessed with our place in the multiverse. For the most part it stands on its own as a complete story. Except for a few notable exceptions (i.e., an appearance by the cousin of Cut-Me-Own-Throat Dibbler, a quick cameo by my all-time favourite Disc denizen The Librarian, and a couple of pregnant references to Ankh Morpork), you don't have to be Discworld savvy to follow the story. It's set in the previously unheard of locale of Omnia, where the Quisition, led by Deacon Vorbis (as evil a character as anything Pratchett has put on paper), tortures into its heretical citizenry a belief in the Great God Om. But the central question in the book, the one that drives the plot forward, is this: what happens when belief dissipates, and is replaced by simple routine? Following the rituals of a religion is not really the same as believing in the power and glory of a God. And on the Discworld it's not like your wanting for Gods to choose from. There are billions of them, and they're all likely to strike you down where you stand if you insult them in any

way. Great God Om used to be the greatest of all Gods, but he's fallen on tough times. The brand of belief favoured by Vorbis is not the kind of belief Om needs. He's losing true believers in the process, and has become quite ineffectual.

Rough translation: I announce to you with great joy, we have a turtle God. That should have been the announcement that greeted the arrival of the God of the City of Om upon his return to Om. Unfortunately he was greeted by stunned disbelief by his sole remaining true believer. Since the size and power of any God/god on Discworld is directly proportional to the level of belief in each God's by its adherents this god is but a turtle. Out of such co-dependent relationships are small gods and Terry Pratchett's Small Gods made. Co-dependent seems an apt term in this context. In Small Gods, Pratchett looks at organized religion through the prism of the co-dependant relationship. This theme is set against a backdrop which, if filmed, would have been produced by David Lean and looked remarkably like Lawrence of Arabia. (The Omnian attack on Ephebia and Brutha's trek with Vorbis across the desert between their cities both left me with images of Lawrence's attack on Aqaba and his disastrous trek across the desert with his youthful assistants.) Specifically, Pratchett examines the co-dependency of man and his God(s). Each is entirely co-dependent on the other. The plot, including the hilarious deus ex machina climax, has been well summarized in the product description and in other reviews so I'll confine myself to a few random observations. No matter how deeply philosophical the underlying theme, the potential reader should know that Pratchett is an excellent writer and capable of some of the funniest lines and paragraphs you are likely to encounter in fiction.

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